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THE

## CHARACTER

Of a True

## Church of England Man.

**N**EXT to the Name *Christian*, I think there is scarce a more honourable Name than that of *Protestant*, when it is made use of to signify such Persons, as whilst they protest against the *Errors* and *Corruptions* of the Church of *Rome*, do also take care to secure *Sound Principles* and truly *Religious Practices* amongst themselves. But by reason of the Reputation of the Name, so many have Endeavoured to shelter themselves under it, that though I do not think the *True Protestant* is lost, yet he is much obscur'd, and it may be somewhat a difficult thing to single him out amongst such Multitudes of *Pretenders*. For we have *Protestant Presbyterians*, *Protestant Independents*, *Protestant Millenaries*, *Protestant Anabaptists*, *Protestant Quakers*, and (with all shame be it spoken) *Protestant Atheists*. There are such various and different Sects and Parties of Men, not only lay Claim to this Title, but (which is more) even while they are a Shame to it, reap the *Benefit* of it, that should any person attempt to frame a Definition of a *Protestant* in such a Latitude as should comprehend all these sorts of Persons, and yet so distinguish them by their several Tenets and Usages, as to exclude others from any Share or Interest in That title, (that it might not be said, that every thing is a *Protestant*, that is not a *Papist*) I verily think it would be such a monstrous Complication of Absurdities and Inconsistencies, as were scarce ever put together since *Adam*; Which makes me wonder how it could enter into some Men's heads to imagine, that an *Act of Comprehension* should keep the Peace amongst such furious wild Cattle, thus jumbled all together. For unless you have a mind, that they should tear out one anothers Throats, certainly it were the best way to keep them asunder, and not let them loose one among another.

But though these restless Crowds of bold *Pretenders* have almost jostled the *Real Protestant* out of both his Name and Right, yet certainly such a one there was and is; and whether you consider the Antiquity of his Claim, or his Principles and Deportment, I doubt not but the *True Church-of-England Man* may stand the Suit against them all for the Title, and carry the Cause from them in any Court whatsoever, where Justice is to be had. But still the Difficulty returns; for as the Case now stands, it is become a Question, and no small Quarrels are raised about it, who is this *True Church-of-England Man*? There is such a Pother and Stir about *High Church*, and *Low-Church*, and *No Church*, That too many are at a loss, to know which or what is, the *True Church*; and persons of such different Complexions call themselves *Church-of-England Men*, that which or who is truly so, is not to many Persons very easily discernable. Now though many persons are mistaken in him, yet he is, a very *Honest, Pious, Good Man*, and therefore I am unwilling to send a *Hue and Cry* after him. But nevertheless, I will adventure to give you such a Character of him, that if you should stumble on him, you may certainly know him; but then do not make this Advantage of it, as to do him any Harm. For if you do, you will be much to blame. But because there is some ill Company, which is very apt to hang on him, that I may discharge and distinguish him from such, I will first tell you, what he is not.

And 1<sup>st</sup>. He is no *Rebel*. He is equally a *faithful Subject* in good and bad Times, and adheres to his Prince, not for his *Fortune* but his *Cause*. He heartily wishes and prays, that all *Kings* may be *Good*, and that the *People* may be so too, that among such Subjects Kings might be ashamed to be bad; and that God might give them good Kings as a Blessing. But if at any time a Prince be bad, he thinks that could hardly be without ill persons of his own Subjects contributing to it, and then looks upon it as a Curse and Judgment of God upon a Nation for their Sins, which ought patiently to be born, till upon their Repentance and Amendment, God shall redress it; And in the mean time more strictly examines himself and his Actions, and takes Care to perform his Duty with greater Exactness, and to set a good Example to others. He thinks it not fit to censure many of his Prince's Actions, which at first view may not look very plausibly, because he doth not know the Reason of them: And seeing the best of Kings are but Men, and consequently not without their Infirmities and Failings, he thinks we ought to make suitable Allowances, and to them more than to other Men, by reason of the variety and Strength of Temptations, which in their Station they are more subject to than others; Their grosser Failings he bewailes, but hath such an utter Abhorrence of all *Assassins* and *Plotters*, that he thinks the *old Woman* more Commendable, who prayed for *Nero's* Life, when almost all Men *curs'd* him, though she did it for this Reason, that she feared, that if he Died, the *Devil* would come in his Room; because she thought a *worse* could not. For *Rebellion* is the *Devil and All*, and brings all his Works along with it. For then *Hell* is broke loose, and all places are fill'd with Confusion and Violence. *Rapes, Murders, Robberies, Spoils and Desolations* are continually perpetrating, and every where seen or heard of; all Pity and even Natural Affection is banished Men's Breasts, the nearest Relations become most bitter E-

emies.

and Just in all his Dealings towards all sorts of Men, not daring in any Thing to go beyond or Defraud his Brother; and if at any time he be more than ordinarily Careful, that his Actions may not carry the least Colour of Injustice, it is when he hath to do with his Enemies, that so he may not give them any Occasion to Baspheeme, and that the Cause of the Righteous may not Suffer by his ill Dealing or Imprudence. *Truth* accompanies his Words, as well as *Justice* his Deeds, and he thinks it better to have had no Tongue to speak, than not to speak *Truth*; *Lying* he looks on as one of the *Foulest* and *Basest* of Crimes, as being that which frustrates the very end of Speech, and is the Bane of all Conversation and Commerce among Men. But as for an *Oath*, it is so tremendous a Thing, that he heartily Wissheth, That all Men were so *Just* in their *Actions* and so *Veracions* in their *Words*, that (all Suspicion of Fraud or Falshood being taken away) there might be no Occasion to Impose any. To Swear to any Thing that is either *False* or *Wicked*, and at the same time to call upon God, not only to be a *Witness* of the *Truth* or *Righteousness* of what he Swareth, but to be a *Revenger* of it in the severest Manner, if it be otherwise, is such a *Mockery* and *Affront* of the *Omniscience*, *Power* and *Justice* of the Divine Majesty, that a greater Provocation cannot be given Him to Vidicate His own Honour by the most dreadful *Vengeance* upon such *Daring Profligate Wretches*. All *Reverence* towards God, all *Security* to Man he thinks must necessarily fail, when Men can play Fast and Loose with Oaths, and neither Regard what they Swear, nor how far they are Obliged to keep it. Nothing therefore can prevail with him to Swear to what is either *False* or *Unjust*; but he will run the hazard of enduring the utmost *Severity* from Man, rather than fall under the *Vengeance* of God: Nay if the Matter be only Doubtful, he dares not make Oath of it, but looks on that Man as little better than Perjured, who will Adventure to Swear to that, which for any thing he knows, may be *False*; and yet as Cautious as he is, he is not unwilling to give the Satisfaction of an Oath, when he can do it according to God's Command, in *Truth*, in *Judgment*, and in *Righteousness*.

If any Man speak ill of him, he is more sorry for them than himself, for *unjust Reproaches* are the *Crime*, and will be the *Harm* of the *Slanderer*; and though he is Tender of his Reputation, as thinking that Man can scarce be truly in Love with *Goodness*, who is so *Regardless* of his *Good Name*, that he would be thought *Evil*; yet he is *Proof* against Scandals, provided he do not deserve them, as knowing that the *strictest Integrity* is often made the Subject of some Mens *obloquy*, and that it is one part of the Christian's portion to pass through *evil Reports* as well as *Good*. But after all he readily Acknowledge's himself to be a Man of *Infirmities* and *Failings*: As for his *Infirmities* he hopes others will allow him them as the inherent Imperfections of all Mankind; as for his *Failings* he will not allow himself in them. For though he hath Charity enough to cover a multitude of Faults in others yet he doth not easily forgive himself in the least Miscarriage; but if it be towards his *Neighbour*, he thinks himself bound not only to *Confess* and be



Sorry for it, but also to make *Reparation* and *Satisfaction* to his power; If he be towards God and himself, he knows he ought not to heap fault upon fault, but to break off by a speedy and sincere Repentance, and to be more watchful over his ways for the future. To conclude, if you would have his Character, you must not take it from one or two of these particulars, but from all of them together; which may endanger to render him a Man so unagreeable with the Humours of the Age, that the greatest part may think him not *Worthy* to live in the *World*, and perhaps some few, that the *World* is not *Worthy* of him.

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**L O N D O N,**

Printed by D. Edwards for N. C. in the Year 1702.

Price 2 d.